MANUAL

OF

UNITARIAN BELIEF.

JAMES FREEMAN CLARKE.

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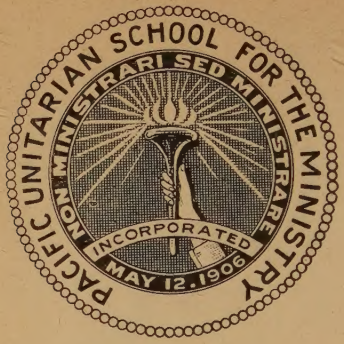

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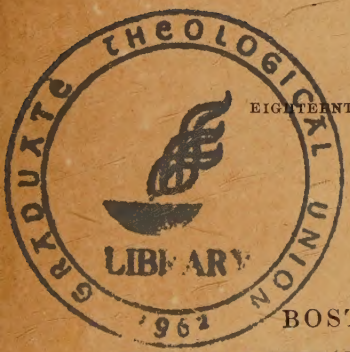
BY

JAMES FREEMAN CLARKE.



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PREFACE.

As Unitarians have no creed, and as their union is one of sympathy and co-operation, and not of formulas, no one among them has any right to define the views of others. A Manual such as this is meant simply to express what, in the opinion of the writer, is the general belief of the majority of Unitarians. Every proposition contained in it is liable to discussion, correction, and revision. No one is bound by it; and it does not attempt to limit thought, but rather to stimulate and rouse inquiry.

It is intended to be made the theme of discussion, and to help the teacher of the class in the Sunday-school, by furnishing, for himself and his pupils, topics for examination. To this end questions are added at the close of each Lesson, and references are given to passages of Scripture.

J. F. C.

The Questions on each Lesson have been prepared by Mrs. Kate Gannett Wells. They follow the text, and also contain suggestions for conversation.

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MANUAL OF UNITARIAN BELIEF.

LESSON I.

RELIGION NECESSARY TO MAN.

§ 1. Religion may be defined as the worship and service of God. It is necessary, because man is feeble, and needs Divine power to give him strength; he is ignorant, and needs Divine light to guide him; he is sinful, and needs Divine mercy to give him peace; he is mortal, and needs faith in things unseen and eternal to give him the hope of continued existence.

§ 2. That religion is natural to man appears from the fact that in a higher or lower form it has been found among all races and nations, among civilized and savage people, in ancient and modern times.

§ 3. The following elements in the soul constitute the basis of religion; namely, the sense of dependence (see § 1); conscience, or the sense of right and wrong, giving the ideas of duty and responsibility; reason, or the faculty which perceives universal and necessary laws;* aspiration, which tends toward the good, the beautiful, and the true, and is the basis of worship.

§ 4. Natural religion is that which is awakened by the sight of the order and beauty of nature, of its adaptations to

* In this definition of reason is followed the school of thought represented by such writers as Coleridge, Victor Cousin, and Dr. James Walker, who distinguished "reason," the higher intellectual faculty, from "reasoning," a function of the lower understanding.

the use of living beings, of its variety and unity; leading the mind up to the conception of a Supreme Being, perfect in power, wisdom, and goodness.

§ 5. Revealed religion consists of the revelations of Divine truth made to the souls of inspired men, thus producing law-givers, prophets, and spiritual leaders for the human race.

QUESTIONS.

§ 1. What is the definition of religion? What is the difference between the worship and the service of God? Can children serve God? Is a child's worship like that of his parents'? How does worshipping and serving God help one to decide upon what is right? What four reasons are given to show the necessity of religion?

§ 2. Why do we think religion is natural to man? What is a great difference between the present and past worship of God? (In the past, the sacrifice of animal and occasionally of human life; in the present, the sacrifice of the selfish will.) What do fetichism, polytheism, and monotheism mean? Who believed in totems, in the worship of sun, moon, and stars, of trees, water, fire, etc., in the worship of the Great Spirit? Does such kind of worship show a sense of fear, awe, mystery?

§ 3. What constitutes the basis of religion? How does the sense of dependence come to us? What is the difference between conscience and reason? Does reason sharpen our conscience? Could we long to be better if we did not feel that there is a higher life which we are capable of living? Is the child's aspiration or desire to be better than he is, a trying; and when he tries, does he feel happy?

§ 4. What is natural religion? Do the planets move and the seasons change by law or chance? What is the chemistry of the sunshine? When a child makes discoveries for himself, do they make him feel that he is great, or that there is a greater Power than he?

§ 5. What is revealed religion? Do natural and revealed religion strengthen each other? What is a revelation? Who

have been the great lawgivers, prophets, and teachers? Are there any now? Could revelation come except through much thinking and through an unselfish life?

What is the root of the word "religion"? (Some authorities give "religo," to bind again; others, "relego," to read again.) What does the first word indicate about our dependence? What does the second word indicate about revelation?

LESSON II.

CHRISTIANITY.

§ 6. Christianity is the religion taught by Jesus and his Apostles, as recorded in the New Testament. Founded by Jesus, this religion has continued to the present time, and is still the faith professed by those nations of the world which are most advanced in civilization.

§ 7. All those born and educated in Christian lands are Christians; as all born and educated in England are Englishmen, and in America are Americans. Without our own choice we receive an influence from the circumstances and institutions which surround us in childhood and youth. We are unconsciously educated by Christian institutions into certain habits of Christian thought and feeling.

When we read the life and teachings of Jesus we find in them what feeds the moral and spiritual nature, and satisfies the highest needs of the soul. We then believe consciously and experimentally in him, because he helps us to be good and to do good.

When we are able to compare the character and truth of Jesus with those of other teachers and masters, — as Moses, Confucius, Buddha, Mohammed, Socrates,— if we find in him a greater depth and fulness of spiritual life than in any other we shall believe intellectually in him as the best of teachers and masters.

§ 8. The two great divisions of the Christian Church in this country are the Protestant and the Roman Catholic. Unitarians believe Protestantism to be more in accordance with the teaching of Jesus, and we also find it more frequently associated with free thought, social progress, and liberal institutions.

QUESTIONS.

§ 6. What does Christianity mean? Why does it have that name? Does Christianity help civilization, or civilization help Christianity? Cannot one be civilized without being Christian? Is something more than civilization needed in order to be good, happy, and useful?

§ 7. Who are Christians? Do some people think that the word "Christian" implies belief in Christ as Master? What is the difference between one who is a Christian in character and one who is a Christian because of the accident of birth? What habits of thought and feeling come through Christian education? Is moral and intellectual education part of a Christian education? Are people who are called Christians always good and wise? What is the difference between a moral and a spiritual nature? How does experience help us to believe in Christ? Do we all have to learn by experience? Do children learn about their parents and about themselves by experience? Does experience mean finding out for one's self? Why does Christ seem dearer and better to you than Moses, Confucius, Buddha, Mohammed, or Socrates? Are not they also masters? What is spiritual life? What is meant by "believing intellectually"? Must we always understand what we believe? Is there a reason for everything? Shall we use our reason about religious matters? If we do not reason, is our belief firm and lasting? Must we wait till "grown up" before we begin to reason?

§ 8. What are the two great divisions of the Protestant Church? What does the word "Protestant" mean? Who was the founder of Protestantism? What is the difference between the Protestant and the Roman Catholic, and between the Roman and the Greek Catholic? What does "Catholic" mean? Has the expression of free thought ever been forbidden? What countries have made great social progress? Do you know of any liberal institutions in your own State? Where have great battles for religious freedom been fought? What has been, and is now, the position of the Catholic Church in regard to its own authority?

LESSON III.

UNITARIANISM.

§ 9. Unitarians, strictly speaking, are those Christians who reject the Church doctrine of the Trinity, and do not believe that Jesus is God the Son, equal with the Father, or that he is the Supreme Being.

Unitarians also usually agree in rejecting the system of doctrines known as Orthodox, as we shall see in the course of this Manual. As these doctrines constitute a logical system, of which the doctrine of the Trinity is the keystone, when that is removed the arch falls.

§ 10. Those who accept the Unitarian belief should openly profess it and should unite in Unitarian churches, because, if we believe that Jesus was not the Supreme Being, and that he taught that he was not, we are bound to testify openly to this conviction. If, according to Christ and his Apostles, there is no such God as the "Trinity," it must be wrong to appear to worship this God, who is unknown to the Scriptures of the New Testament. Moreover, it has been found that wherever Unitarian churches are established they become centres of movements in behalf of education, philanthropy, and social reforms.

QUESTIONS.

§ 9. What is the derivation of the words "Unitarian" and "Trinitarian"? Is Jesus the Son of God, or is he equal to him? Why is the doctrine of the unity of God so important? What does the word "Orthodox" signify? Does each sect believe itself Orthodox, according to the strict signification of the word? Why is the doctrine of the Trinity called a Church doctrine? Of what church is it a doctrine? Are Catholics Trinitarians? What other sects besides Unitarians believe in

the unity of God? Why are there more Trinitarian than Unitarian Protestants?

§ 10. Do we encourage error when we are silent about our own truth? What did Jesus mean by saying that "he that is not with me is against me"? Do children owe loyalty to truth? Must they wait till they have grown up before they are Unitarians? Is it loyal to go regularly to another church than a Unitarian? Why would Christ and his Apostles be more likely than other people to know about Christ's relation to God? Could you call Christ a philanthropist? What is the Golden Rule?

LESSON IV.

THE BIBLE.

§ 11. Unitarians regard the Bible as a sacred book because full of the utterances of inspired souls. It brings us near to God by placing us in communion with the deepest and loftiest experiences of mankind.

§ 12. We believe the Bible to be an inspired book because it is full of the thoughts which come to men by inspiration. The Psalms, the Book of Job, Isaiah, the writings of Paul, and the words of Jesus were not the result of pure thinking, but came from a region higher than the reflective reason.

§ 13. But, though considering it an inspired book, Unitarians also regard the Bible as coming not only from God, but also from man. It is full of human experience, sorrow, joy, temptation, sin, repentance, trust, hope, love. Coming from the deepest places in man's heart, it goes to the deepest places. It has its heights and depths, its lofty mountain-tops and its level barren plains. It is human, therefore fallible. Written by many men and at different times, it is of very various application and value. There is little that is edifying for us in the Book of Leviticus or the Book of Revelation. Our Bible opens naturally not there, but at the Psalms, the Sermon on the Mount, the parables of Jesus, the ardent utterances of the soul of Paul.

§ 14. Unitarians do not believe in the infallibility of the Bible. Inspiration leads to the sight of truth and reality, but not necessarily to a perfectly accurate description of what is seen. But these errors of expression do not detract from the authority of the Bible as a teacher of the best moral and spiritual truth.

§ 15. Unitarians also see a difference in the moral and religious teaching of different parts of the Bible. The Old Testament teaches a different doctrine from the New in regard to God, duty, and immortality. The truth unfolds itself gradually to human eyes; and the human race may say, as Paul said, "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I felt as a child, I thought as a child; now that I am become a man, I have put away childish things (1 Cor. xiii. 11).

The Unitarian objections to the doctrine of plenary or infallible inspiration of the Scripture are such as these: —

(a) *The Scripture nowhere claims or assumes infallibility.* The texts usually relied on (2 Tim. iii. 16 and 2 Peter i. 21) teach that the Prophets and Apostles were inspired, but do not assert that their inspiration made them infallible.

(b) *The Scripture contains errors and contradictions which are fatal to the theory of its infallibility.* But if its authority consists in its being more full of truth and goodness than any other book, then its errors of detail cannot shake its divine power over the mind and heart.

(c) *The Apostle Paul distinctly declares the partial, provisional, and temporary nature of that which he teaches.* Having said (1 Cor. ii. 10–16) that he is inspired and led by the Spirit to know and to speak Christian truth, he adds, in the same Epistle (1 Cor. xiii. 8–12), that all knowledge, so far as we are able to state it, is partial, relative, and incomplete, and will be done away.

QUESTIONS.

§ 11. Why is the Bible a sacred book? How does it bring us near to God? Do other books than the Bible also help us to feel near to him?

§ 12. What is inspiration? Is the lasting and noble effect of inspiration a test of its truth? Who else besides Jesus were inspired? If so, was their inspiration different in kind and degree from that of Christ?

§ 13. Is the Bible also a natural book? Does it contain only good thoughts and tell only of good men? What does "falli-

ble" mean? Are all parts of the Bible of equal value? What passages do you like best? Are they the same that you preferred when a little child?

§ 14. Are there also errors and contradictions in the Bible? What does a comparison of dates and statements in different books prove? Is the *real* value of the Bible thereby lessened?

§ 15. Is even all the moral and religious teaching of the Bible of the same importance? What is meant by "moral" and "religious"? Can you be moral without being religious? Which is the larger term? Have Unitarians always laid special stress upon the need of morality? How does the New Testament idea of God, duty, and immortality differ from that of the Old Testament? State distinctly the difference between plenary or infallible inspiration and inspiration. What texts teach the inspiration of the Prophets? What does St. Paul say? What is your own idea of the value and style of the Bible, and of the methods employed in writing it? Have many nations their own Bibles? Are they of value to us? Were they inspired? Does our own Bible lessen or gain in value because of the Unitarian view regarding it?

LESSON V.

BELIEF CONCERNING GOD.

§ 16. Unitarians believe that God is one, — one being and one person. They believe that he is infinitely wise, holy, and good; that he is omnipotent and omnipresent; that his highest attribute is love, and that his best name is "Father."

The Unitarian belief concerning God can be expressed in the words of the New Testament. For example, —

(a) *As regards his unity.*

Mark xii. 29. Jesus answered, "The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord." 1 Cor. viii. 4: "We know . . . there is none other God but one." 1 Cor. viii. 6: "To us there is but one God, the Father." Gal. iii. 20: "God is one." 1 Tim. ii. 5: "For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." Eph. iv. 6: "One God and Father of all, who is above all."

(b) *That this one God is the Father.*

John xvii. 3. Jesus, praying to the Father, says, "This is life eternal, that they might know thee THE ONLY TRUE GOD, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." John x. 29: "My Father, which gave them me, IS GREATER THAN ALL." John xiv. 28: "I go unto the Father; FOR MY FATHER IS GREATER THAN I."

(c) *That God the Father is almighty, omnipresent, and omniscient.*

Acts xvii. 27: The Lord is "not far from every one of us; for in him we live, and move, and have our being." 1 Cor. viii. 6: "One God, the Father, OF WHOM ARE ALL THINGS." 1 Cor. xv. 28: "When all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, THAT GOD MAY BE ALL IN ALL." Rom. xi.

36: "For of him, and through him, and to him are all things." Eph. iv. 6: "Who is above all, and through all, and in you all."

(d) *That God is essentially love, and that he loves all his creatures, both bad and good.*

1 John iv. 16: "God is love, and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." Matt. v. 44, 45: "Love your enemies . . . that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." 1 John iv. 8: "He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love."

QUESTIONS.

§ 16. Is there any difference between "being" and "person"? What do the words "infinite," "omnipotent," "omnipresent," "omniscient," and "attribute" mean? Why is God's best name "Father"? Who first called him by that name? What was the Jewish idea of God? Is our idea of God unchangeable? What was your first idea? what is your present? what is the highest? May there not be still higher ideas of him? Why do we like to use the Bible words in describing him? Against what other conception did the Jews emphasize the idea of God's unity? Against whom did Paul insist upon such unity? In learning Jesus' thought about God do we also learn what he thought about his own relation to God? What did he mean by "life eternal"? Why do we quote Paul's texts about God and Christ? Which text of those given seems to you the plainest concerning the unity of God? Do confidence and joy, or fear and doubt, arise in your mind when you read Acts xvii. 27? Who wrote the "Acts"? Besides the Bible, what other proofs have we of the existence of God? What is meant by the "argument from design"? Does science help to prove a God? Is God in the infinitely small as well as in the infinitely great things of nature? What does your own consciousness tell you about the existence of a God? Can you disbelieve the facts and hopes of your own consciousness? When you find that the same facts

and hopes are universal, do they convince you that there is a God? Would the Bible alone be sufficient proof of his existence without the proofs afforded by science and human consciousness? What does evolution teach you about God? Why is God "essentially love"? How does a loving disposition bring us near to God? Is God as just as he is loving? Do you ever use any other name for God than Father?

LESSON VI.

THE TRINITY.

§ 17. The doctrine of the Trinity, as stated in the creeds of all the so-called Orthodox churches, is this: that there are three persons in the Godhead, — the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost,— and that these three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory, but distinguished by personal properties. The Athanasian Creed is the most distinct formula of this doctrine. It says: "The Catholic faith is this,— that we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity, neither confounding the persons nor dividing the substance. For there is one person of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Ghost. But the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost is all one; the glory equal, the majesty co-eternal." This doctrine teaches that the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God; and yet there are not three Gods, but one God. Each may be worshipped separately. Each has a separate work and office, which must not be confounded with that of the others; for that would be the heresy of Sabellius, who confounded the persons. But we must not say that they are three persons, like Peter, James, and John; for that would be dividing the substance, which is another fatal heresy.

See the "Westminster Assembly's Catechism," which is the creed of the whole Presbyterian church ; the Athanasian Creed, still read or sung, by authority, four times a year in the Church of England; the Augsburg Confession; and the creeds of other Orthodox denominations.

§ 18. Unitarians reject the Church doctrine of the Trinity, —

(a) *Because it is unintelligible.*

Although many attempts have been made to explain it, none have proved satisfactory. It therefore remains, even by the admission of its advocates, a mystery; and a mystery is something unintelligible, and therefore cannot be an object of belief.

(b) *Because the doctrine of the Trinity is nowhere plainly taught in the New Testament.*

This is admitted by many candid Trinitarians. Thus, Neander, a Trinitarian, says of this doctrine: "It is expressly held forth in no one particular passage of the New Testament." (Church History, Torrey's translation, vol. i. p. 572.) Many such testimonies might be adduced.

(c) *Because the texts quoted in support of the Trinity are inadequate or irrelevant.*

The famous text of the Three Witnesses has been shown so convincingly to be an interpolation, that it has been rejected by most Trinitarians and omitted in the Revised Version. The Baptismal Formula (Matt. xxviii. 19) and the Benediction (2 Cor. xiii. 14) are passages often brought forward as proofs of the Trinity. But in neither of them is it stated that the Son is God, or that the Holy Spirit is a person, or that these three are the one supreme God. That these passages should be constantly quoted as proofs of the doctrine of the Trinity shows that no real proof-texts of the doctrine can be found in the New Testament. They may seem to imply it to one who already believes that doctrine; but to those who do not already believe it they appear as a summary of the truth which proceeds from the Father, the only true God, — through Jesus Christ, his holy child and the mediator of his love, — and made part of the soul and life by the inward influence of the Divine Spirit.

(d) *Because there are many texts in the New Testament plainly opposed to the Church doctrine of the Trinity.*

Such are the texts in which the Father is called the one or only God; which could not be said if the Son is also God, and the Holy Spirit God. 1 Cor. viii. 5, 6: "For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there are gods many and lords many,) *but to us there is one God, the Father.*" Eph. iv. 6: "*One God and Father of all*, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." John xvii. 3: Jesus prays to the Father, saying, "Father! the hour is come!" and immediately adds, "This is life eternal, *that they might know thee the only true God.*" Eph. v. 20. The Apostle directs the Ephesians to give "thanks always, for all things,

in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, *to God, even the Father.*" (Revised Version.)

If the Son were God, and the Holy Ghost God, it would be our duty to pray to them also. But all prayers are commanded to be addressed to the Father. See Matt. vi. 9; John iv. 23, xvi. 23.

(e) *Because we know when and where the doctrine of the Trinity began, and how it gradually took form.*

In the famous Proem to his Gospel John opposes the idea that the Logos, or Word, was anything different from God himself. The Word, he tells us, is God speaking, first, in creation, — "By him," God speaking, "were all things made." He refers here, no doubt, to the common phrases of the Old Testament, — God said, "Let there be light;" "The Word of the Lord came to Isaiah;" etc. Secondly, the Word is God speaking in the soul, — "That was the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." Thirdly, the Word is God revealed in Jesus, — "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us." He thus teaches that as God speaks in creation and speaks in the human reason, he also speaks in Jesus more clearly and fully. But, as if to obviate the possibility of being understood to say that Christ was God when he really says that God is in Christ, he adds, "No man hath SEEN God at any time."

This conception of Christ as a Logos, or Word of God, or a revelation of God, continued to be taught down to the time of the Synod of Nice (A. D. 325). The Apostles' Creed, which in its substance goes back to a very early Christian period, contains no trace of the doctrine of the Trinity. It calls God "the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth." The Nicene Creed, in its original form, knows nothing of the Trinity. It calls Jesus "God," but speaks of him as God *of* God, meaning "God derived from God,' and so makes his divinity derived and dependent. And it was not till the year 380, after much controversy and party strife, that the doctrine of the Trinity was established in the Church. In the year 383 Theodosius the Emperor threatened to punish all who did not accept this doctrine.

QUESTIONS.

§ 17. What is the most distinct formula of the Trinitarian creed? State it. Do the Trinitarians whom you know believe exactly that, or some modification of it? Why is it called *Athanasian* Creed? Who was the opposer of Athanasius? Who was emperor at that time? In what century was the Athanasian Creed adopted? Do you understand it? What do other people mean by it? Can you put it into words of your own, and yet keep sense in the words? Who was Sabellius? What is the Westminster Assembly's Catechism? How old is it? In what form of church government do Presbyterians believe? When was the Augsburg Confession drawn up, and why?

§ 18. Why do Unitarians reject the doctrine of the Trinity? Can you believe what you do not understand? What does the phrase "reason in religion" mean? Should you reason about a passage in Scripture just as you would about a passage in any other book? What does Neander say about this doctrine? What famous text is interpolated? Do the Baptismal Formula and the Benediction state the doctrine of the Trinity? Must prejudice in favor of an opinion exclude examination of the grounds for belief? What texts prove the unity of God? To whom should we pray? Can you trace the growth of the doctrine of the Trinity? What were the three ways in which John said that God revealed himself? What was the Logos? When and what was the Synod of Nice? What is the Nicene Creed? Does even that indicate that the divinity of Jesus as God was derived? Has the Apostles' Creed any hint of the Trinity? Do not many Trinitarians therefore acknowledge that the doctrine of the Trinity is only a Church doctrine? In what year was it finally established?

LESSON VII.

JESUS CHRIST.*

§ 19. Unitarians believe Jesus to be a created being, finite and not infinite, and therefore below the Supreme Being in his nature and person. Some, called Arians, think him to have been created before all other finite beings; but this view is held by few, and seems to have been only a transition belief. It is supported by a few texts which call Christ "the first-born of every creature," the being by whom all things were created, etc. (Col. i. 15, 16). These texts, however, seem to require a different explanation in order to make them consistent with the numerous other passages in which the same writer calls Christ "the man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. ii. 5). Unitarians therefore generally hold Jesus to be a man, human in soul and body; or, as the Epistle to the Hebrews expresses it, "in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren" (Heb. ii. 17).

Some Unitarians believe that though Jesus was a man, entirely human in mind and body, yet that he was an exceptional man, made free from sin and kept so by an exceptional Divine influence, made perfect in all spiritual and moral attributes, that he might be the leader of his race. In this view he was endowed with supernatural gifts by which he was distinguished from other men.

Other Unitarians hold that Jesus was not so much an exceptional as a representative man, such a man as all are intended to be. In this sense he is the ideal man. In their view sin is not natural, but unnatural, and a sinless man is more truly a man than is a sinner. They also believe that all men will grow up into the stature of Jesus, and become like him, so that he will be the first-born among many brethren. They contend

* We follow the custom in saying Jesus Christ, though it would be more correct always to say Jesus *the* Christ. Christ, or Messiah, is not a proper name, but the name of an office.

that the typical man is not the imperfect, but the perfect man, just as the typical plant or animal of any species is not an imperfect but a perfect specimen. Any other view, say they, takes us back to the doctrine of natural depravity.

§ 20. As the Scriptures frequently call Jesus the Son of God, but never call him God the Son, Unitarians believe him to have been the Son in the sense of an intimate union with God and dependence on him.

When Jesus said, "I and my Father are one" (John x. 30), he must have meant one in sympathy, not one in essence; since he prayed (John xvii. 11) that his disciples might be one *even as* he and the Father were one. He certainly could not have intended to ask that his disciples might be one in essence.

§ 21. Unitarians believe that the great glory of Jesus is his spiritual and moral glory. His true greatness was in his devotion to the Divine will, his sympathy with suffering man, his readiness to perform the lowliest offices and bear a death of shame in order to save mankind from the power and evil of sin. All this is continually expressed in the New Testament, in passages similar to that in Philippians ii. 5–11. In this place the Apostle exhorts his disciples to have the same mind that was in Jesus; who, being the chief manifestation in the world of the Divine character, did not ambitiously grasp at the honor of that high dignity but was willing to die the death of a slave in the service of humanity; and he adds: "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow . . . and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." This passage, often quoted as a proof-text by Trinitarians, is an argument for Unitarian views of Jesus. For, while it attributes to him the highest honors, it states that these are all *given* to him by God, that he is exalted by God, and that this great authority is "to the glory of God the Father." And it also ascribes the origin of all this glory, not to the divine nature of Jesus, but to his humility of character.

§ 22. Though Unitarians do not believe it right to call Jesus God, they see no objection to the epithet "divine." He was a

divine man, not a human God. All agree that he revealed God as Father, as Love, as Infinite Goodness, as perfect Providence. He was the image of the unseen God; he was the Word of God uttered to the world; he who has seen him has seen the Father; he is the well-beloved Son, dwelling in the bosom of the Father; God dwells in him, and he in God. All these expressions teach the intimate union of his soul with the Infinite Spirit, an intimacy which he desired to communicate to all his fellow-men.

Let us notice that in the New Testament almost every Divine attribute claimed for Jesus is also claimed for his disciples. Was he said to "know all things"? It is also said to them, "Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things" (1 John ii. 20). Is it said that he was "without sin"? It is also said of them, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; and he cannot sin because he is born of God." Did Christ work miracles? He says of the believer, "Greater works than these shall he do." Did God give to Christ a glory which he had before the world was? He says of his disciples "The glory which thou gavest me, I have given them." Did he rise from the dead to a higher life? Paul says: "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things that are above;" and "As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." Did Christ come to judge the world? It is said of the disciples, "Know ye not that the saints shall judge the world?" Did God dwell in Christ? It is written of his followers, "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?"

The Scripture thus teaches that (1) all that Christ had, he received from God; and (2) that all he received, he received in order to impart it to his fellow-men.

§ 23. Unitarians therefore believe in Jesus as a man raised up to be the mediator to his fellow-men of the divine life; but they do not believe that he was God, —

(a) *Because Jesus always speaks of himself as a man, and is always so spoken of in Scripture.*

(b) *Because we find no account in Scripture that a revelation of his divinity was ever made to the disciples.*

They regarded their Master as a man, but wiser and better than themselves. We should surely have found in the New Testament some trace of the astonishment and awe which must have come upon them if the wonderful fact had been communicated to them that their Master was the Supreme God.

(c) *Because we find no opposition made by the Jews to this doctrine.*

Nothing could have seemed more abhorrent to the Jewish mind than to be told that Jesus was the Supreme Jehovah. On one occasion they falsely bring the charge that Jesus, being a man, made himself God (John x. 33). Jesus, instead of saying, "Yes! I am God," answers by quoting a passage in the Old Testament, where those to whom the word of God came were called gods, and then says that he had only called himself the Son of God. After this no such charge was made by the Jews. We find many accusations made against the Apostles, but they are never charged with calling their Master the Supreme God. They were only commanded not to teach in the name of Jesus (Acts iv. 18, v. 40).

(d) *Because Jesus plainly distinguishes himself from God.*

See John xiii. 3, xvi. 27; Mark x. 18; Matt. xxvii. 46; John xvii. 7.

(e) *Because God is called the God of Jesus Christ.*

See 2 Cor. xi. 31; Eph. i. 3, 17; Rom. xv. 6; 1 Pet. i. 3; Heb. i. 2, 9.

(f) *Because the Scriptures teach that there is one God, who is distinct from the Christ.*

See 1 Cor. viii. 6; 1 Tim. ii. 5; Eph. iv. 5, 6.

(g) *Because the highest powers and glory ascribed to Christ are said to be given to him by God.*

See Phil. ii. 9; Col. i. 19; Acts ii. 36, iii. 13, v. 31; Matt. xxviii. 18; John v. 19; Eph. i. 22; etc.

(h) *Because Jesus himself teaches his subordination to God.*

See John xiv. 28; Matt. xx. 23; Mark xiii. 32; John x. 29.

(i) *Because Jesus prayed to God.*

See Luke vi. 12; Matt. xi. 25; Luke xxii. 42: Heb. v. 7.

(j) *Because he commands us to pray, not to himself, but to God.*

See John iv. 23, xvi. 23; Luke xi. 1, 2.

QUESTIONS.

§ 19. Do Unitarians consider Jesus Christ as a finite, created being? If so, is he inferior to God? What did Arius think? Is he human in soul and body, made like ourselves? What verse in Hebrews says this? Though all Unitarians agree in saying he was a man, how do they differ in regard to his being an exceptional character? What is the difference between an exceptional and a representative man? Which do you think he was? Which way of regarding him would make him the most help to you? Is he the ideal, or typical, man? Can you then hope to grow like him?

§ 20. What is the difference between "God the Son" and the "Son of God"? What did Jesus mean by saying "I and my Father are one"? Are not we sons of God, and sometimes one with him?

§ 21. What was Christ's greatest glory? What does Philippians ii. 5–11 teach about his glory and his humility?

§ 22. How can we call Jesus divine, and yet say he is not God? Have you not felt that the word could also be used of some noble friend of yours? What verses show that Jesus claims for his disciples the union with God and the power ascribed to himself?

§ 23. How is Jesus a mediator? How did Jesus speak of himself? How did the disciples regard him? Did the Jews think he was God? What texts prove the unity of God and the subordination of Christ to God?

LESSON VIII.

FAITH AND BELIEF IN REGARD TO CHRIST.

§ 24. Faith in Christ is trusting in him as a revelation of truth and love. Jesus says, "Ye believe in God, believe also in me" (John xiv. 1).

§ 25. Jesus asked men to believe in him because he knew that he clearly saw the way to help them. If they would only trust in him, he would give them comfort and peace, put their feet in the right path, and enable them to conquer their sins.

If we have faith in the wise, the good, the noble, the generous, we also become wiser, nobler, more generous; and as Christ is the wisest and most generous soul that we have ever known, faith in him is the strongest influence of all. His great hope of the coming of a kingdom of heaven on earth has inspired his disciples to overcome the evils of the world. His faith in the fatherly love of God has brought comfort to the sorrowful and the unfortunate. His faith in the triumph of good over evil has filled the world with a living hope.

§ 26. Besides faith *in* Jesus there is a belief *about* him. We form this belief by study and reason. The good of having a distinct belief is that it saves us from doubt, hesitation, and confusion of mind.

§ 27. Unitarians believe that the four Gospels contain an adequate historical account of the life, teaching, and character of Jesus. They believe him to be the Christ, or King, not in the sense of a Jewish king, but as one who is to be the master of the world by the power of the truth which he taught. That he himself held this view appears from John xviii. 37: "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth." Unitarians, generally, believe that Jesus wrought wonderful works of healing, but that it is possible that some of the accounts in the Gospels may have been imperfectly reported. There are Unitarians who

reject the miraculous element in the Gospels and yet believe in the leadership of Jesus.

§ 28. It is objected to Unitarians that they differ from each other so widely in opinion as to have no common creed. Roman Catholics make the same objection against the whole Protestant Church. But God has so made the human mind that as soon as men really begin to think they begin to differ. If, therefore, there is no difference of opinion in a church; it shows that there is no individual thought in that church. Men think alike only by not thinking at all. This is assent, not conviction. Such belief is, in reality, no belief, and has no value. The only agreement in opinion which is worth anything is that harmony which comes after full and free inquiry about subjects on which men differ. Only thus can questions be really settled; without such free discussion differences are only covered up. The variety of opinions among Unitarians is therefore the evidence of free thought.

QUESTIONS.

§ 24. What is faith in Christ? What do you mean when you say you have faith in a friend? Even when you do not agree with another's opinion, can you not trust his character, "believe" in him?

§ 25. Was it for selfish reasons that Christ asked men to believe in him? Could he help them if they distrusted him? What effect does our faith in goodness produce upon us? In what way has Christ's own hope and faith helped men to conquer evil and to work for the sake of others?

§ 26. Is faith an unreasoning quality, or the exercise of some of the highest parts of our nature? What must we have besides faith in Christ? What is the use in a distinct belief? Because it is distinct to-day according to our present light, is it unchangeable? What constitutes progress in belief? Are we apt to be more patient and reverent in our belief as we grow older?

§ 27. What do Unitarians usually believe about the general correctness of the Gospels? How do they believe Jesus to be

Christ or King? Did he perform all the miracles that are narrated? Do many Unitarians reject belief in all miracles and yet accept Christ as leader? Are there some who do not emphasize his leadership and yet have faith in him?

§ 28. Is it objectionable for people to differ? Can it be prevented? Should not such differences be generously recognized? What is the difference between assent and conviction? When is agreement in opinion valuable? What is free thought? Is there not more progress, power, and harmony among Unitarians when we acknowledge the differences within ourselves and yet are tender towards each other's reverences?

LESSON IX.

THE WORK OF CHRIST.

§ 29. Unitarians believe that Jesus felt himself to be sent by God to reveal his truth (John xviii. 37) and pardoning love (John i. 17; Matt. ix. 2, 6); to seek and save the lost (Matt. xviii. 11; Luke xix. 10); to give rest to the weary and heavy-laden (Matt. xi. 28); to carry up to a higher morality the law of duty (Matt. v. 18, 20, 21, 27, 33, 39, 44); to sacrifice himself for the good of others (Matt. xx. 28); to call sinners to repentance (Mark ii. 17); to preach good news to the poor, freedom to the captives, sight to the blind, and comfort to the sorrowful (Luke iv. 18, vii. 22); to reveal the Fatherly love of God (Matt. xi. 27; John xvii. 26); and to give spiritual life and a sense of immortality to mankind (John vi. 40, 47; John x. 10). Among Unitarians there are sometimes differing explanations of these texts; but all agree that the essential mission of Christ is to make men better, wiser, and happier in this world and in that which is to come.

§ 30. Unitarians believe it the chief work of Christ to save men from sin and evil here. They do not believe it his chief work to save them from the consequences of sin hereafter. He comes to take them out of a present hell, and lead them into a present heaven.

§ 31. Christ saves us from the power of sin by his *teaching*, his *life*, and his *sufferings*. By his teaching he shows us that right and wrong are rooted in the very nature of things and in the laws of the universe.

See the passages where Jesus states the laws of moral consequence in human life. Examples: "Whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted." "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." "It is more blessed to give than to receive." "With

what judgment ye judge ye shall be judged." "Every good tree bringeth forth good fruit." "The tree is known by its fruit." In all such passages Jesus is stating the working of everlasting laws.

§ 32. While the *teaching* of Jesus manifests the duty and expediency of right-doing, his example shows the possibility, reality, and beauty of a *life* given to the service of God and man.

"I have given you an example that ye should do as I have done unto you." "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus," etc. (Phil. ii. 5). "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. v. 20). "Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man which built his house upon a rock" (Matt. vii. 24).

§ 33. Jesus also saves us from the power of sin *by his sufferings*, in which are included not only his death, but his sacrifices and endurance during his life. His principal suffering was probably from the sight of human sin and all the misery occasioned by it. His sympathy was with the lowest and humblest of mankind. Living in the full light of the love of God, he devoted himself to the service of man, and especially of the weak and sinful. He thus becomes a manifestation of the love of God, and gives us faith in the Divine goodness and grace offered to every child.

QUESTIONS.

§ 29. In what general ideas concerning the work of Christ do all agree? What Bible verses express these ideas? Do you think you are any happier or better because of Christ's life? Why is it that wickedness, misery, war, still exist? State in your own words what you think Christ wanted to do for the world. How far do you think he accomplished it?

§ 30. What was Christ's chief work? What is meant by "heaven and hell"? Is it wiser and kinder in Christ to have only worked to make men better in this life? If better in this

life, will they necessarily be better hereafter? Could Christ have saved them from suffering in the hereafter? Must we try to do what is right *now?* Shall we then be happy now or by and by?

§ 31. What are the three ways in which Christ saves us from doing wrong? Is he then rightly called our Saviour? What verses of Christ show that he believed in the necessary moral consequences of right and wrong? Why do we say *moral* consequences? Does not evil-doing sometimes seem to succeed for a little while? Does it ever have even worldly success in the end?

§ 32. How does the life of Jesus supplement his teaching, and what does his life prove about our own capacities? Is goodness a reality that can be obtained? What verses show the feeling of Christ and his Apostles concerning the possibility of being good? Is there any point at which to stop in being good? Is it easy to try to be like Christ? Is it easy to be really like him? Would it have been easier centuries ago than it is now? Are we to imitate Christ's example exactly? What are we then to do? Is it not his spirit as shown in his life that we should imitate?

§ 33. What was Christ's chief suffering? Have you ever known any one else who felt the same pain? How does a mother feel whose boy or girl is wrong, wicked? Does the knowledge of such suffering make one wish to do right? If our parents so love us, and Christ so loved us, how does God feel towards us? By what word do you like best to call Christ,—as Saviour, Christ, Master, Teacher, Brother, Friend? Does your position towards him depend upon which word you use? Have such differences brought discussions? Is there not harmony in the inner meaning of all these words?

LESSON X.

THE HOLY SPIRIT.

§ 34. Unitarians do not believe the Holy Spirit to be a separate person in the Godhead, but to be the influence of God's spirit on the human soul, to give strength, peace, light, love. It is said to be poured out, shed abroad, given, etc.; which expressions apply to an influence, but not to a person.

§ 35. Unitarians believe this influence to be given by a constant operation, wherever the human heart is prepared and ready to receive it. Therefore Christians are told to "live in the Spirit," to "walk in the Spirit," and the Spirit is said to "dwell in them." It is given not only to Prophets and Apostles, to saints and martyrs, but to all who desire help to lead better lives.

§ 36. The difference between the influence of the Spirit of God and other influences which come from him is this, — that whereas the others come to us from without, through nature, events, and our fellow-men, the influence of the Spirit is God speaking to us within the soul. We commune with God outwardly through his works and through the events of our earthly life. We commune with him inwardly when we are by ourselves, and when in the secret chamber of our hearts we lift up our thoughts and wishes, our sorrows and sins, to our Heavenly Father.

QUESTIONS.

§ 34. Is the Holy Spirit a separate person in the Godhead? What is it? What are the words used about it which show that it is an influence?

§ 35. How is this influence given? Do some people think it depends upon arbitrary or miraculous causes, or that God gives

it only to certain persons? When do we think it comes to us? Must we prepare ourselves for it? How can we do that? Is it given to us all? Have you ever seen people in whose faces it shines, and have you heard it in their voices? Are they your saints? What is your own word for Holy Spirit? Don't you know it when you see it in some little child who is sick and patient, or in some brave boy or girl before whom no one speaks coarsely? If we are told to "walk in the Spirit," does it not show that it is an every-day holy possession?

§ 36. What is the difference between the influence of the Spirit of God and other influences coming from him? Even if we have it, may we not lose it? Does it come again? Why and how? Is the amount of such spirit within us something which grows by communion? How has the Holy Spirit been represented in art? Does its symbol prove its peace? Does our own spirit influence that of our friends? Does God's spirit influence us in a similar way? Does it give the best and deepest happiness to feel that the influence of God is over us, and that through it we help others most?

LESSON XI.

UNITARIAN BELIEF CONCERNING MAN.

§ 37. Unitarians commonly believe that in all men there are religious capacities, by which they may come into communion with God. These are reason, conscience, freedom, love of truth, of beauty, of goodness, the sense of the infinite, the capability of disinterested love; and the kindred sentiments of veneration, awe, aspiration, etc. These are found, more or less developed, in all men, and where properly educated and unfolded make the true dignity and worth of human nature.

It is said (Rom. i. 19, 20) that all men have a sufficient knowledge of God to enable them to obey and love him; and in Rom. ii. 14, that the heathen who never had a revealed moral law "do by nature the things contained in the law." The case of Cornelius the Roman (Acts x. 1) leads Peter to say that good men, in all nations, are acceptable to God (Acts x. 34). See also such passages as the Beatitudes, where the blessings of Christianity are promised to the meek, the humble, the pure in heart, etc.

§ 38. Unitarians reject the Calvinistic doctrines of original sin and total depravity, the responsibility of the human race for Adam's fall, and the belief that, until converted, man is under the wrath of God. They maintain, on the contrary, that if there is hereditary depravity, there is also inherited goodness; that such phrases as "the wrath of God" are figurative, and cannot apply to the Eternal Goodness. They believe that inherited evil is misery, but not guilt, and is what Paul refers to when he says, twice over, of involuntary wrong-doing, "Now it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me" (Rom. vii. 17, 20).

That man in his natural state has the power to do right, and that such right-doing is well pleasing to God, appears from

such passages as these: The parable of the Sower, where the seed (the Word) falls into "the good ground" of "an honest and good heart" (Luke viii. 15); the passages which teach that the spirits of little children see God, face to face (Matt. xviii. 10, xix. 14); the parable of the Good Samaritan and that of the Pharisee and Publican (Luke x. 30, xviii. 9), where the good qualities of heretics and outsiders are commended by Christ. And see especially the account of the Day of Judgment, where the heathen who did good actions without having heard of Christ are placed among his sheep.

§ 39. When Unitarians speak of "the dignity of human nature," they do not mean the dignity of man in his actual condition, but of man as God means him to be and has made him to become. We find in all men powers and faculties which unite them with eternity no less than with time. We have within us reason, which is capable of seeking and finding the noblest truths. We have conscience, which shows us the difference between right and wrong. We have the power of freedom, by which we can choose good and refuse evil. We have the sense of the beautiful, the true, and the good; and a longing for what is unchanging and eternal. These powers, which are in all men, constitute the dignity of human nature, and make it capable of perpetual progress.

QUESTIONS.

§ 37. Through what capacities within us do we come into communion with God? Have all the same capacities? What passages are there in the New Testament which show how its writers felt? Could you not say the same from your own experience?

§ 38. What is meant by original sin and total depravity? Who was Calvin? Did Christ or Calvin teach such doctrines? Why do not Unitarians believe them? What is hereditary depravity? In the lesson on God what did we learn about him? What parables of Christ show his belief about man? What is human nature? Is there a mixture of good and bad in you?

How much does inheritance have to do with your present self? Can character conquer evil inheritance? Is evil inheritance to be forgiven and struggled against? Will circumstances conquer you, or will you conquer them? What is noble self-development? Has God made you capable of it? Is its test to do as much as some one else, or as much as you can? Are comparison with others and self-examination wise?

§ 39. What is meant by the "dignity of human nature"? What four faculties indicate this dignity? Is such dignity in you, in bad people, in savages? Is there any reason why it should not be in all? Can you make it? Must you not? Does God help you? What is your idea of why and how he has made you? Are you sinful? if so, what makes you? Is not the sin largely your own fault? Must you be generous in making excuses for others, but stern in regard to excuses concerning yourself?

LESSON XII.

ATONEMENT AND RECONCILIATION.

§ 40. Unitarians believe that atonement and reconciliation are the same thing. Both mean a state of union and peace between man and God; the harmony between the Divine justice and Divine mercy; and the substitution of trust toward God and dependence on him, for fear and the dread of his displeasure.

§ 41. Unitarians do not believe that Christ came to reconcile God to man, but to reconcile man to God; not to make God love us, but to reveal his love; not to harmonize his justice and mercy, but to show that they are always in harmony. Christ's death was not a sacrifice made to appease the Divine anger, but it was an expression of the Divine love. Paul says (Rom. viii. 32), "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"

QUESTIONS.

§ 40. Are atonement and reconciliation the same? Does a different division of the syllables in the first word, *at-one-ment*, show its meaning? What is meant by Divine justice and mercy? Are they different? Is trust or fear the higher feeling? Would the reason why you feel one or the other depend upon yourself, or upon God, or upon your own conduct and your idea of the nature of God?

§ 41. Do many Christians believe that God was angry with man, and that his wrath was only appeased by the death of Christ? By what denominational name are such Christians known? What is meant by "vicarious atonement"? How does such a doctrine agree with the Unitarian idea of God? Is it God that must change in order to forgive us, or we in order

to be forgiven? Are two parties necessary to a reconciliation? If the offender repents and tries to make up for the wrong he has done, to atone, is it necessary that any change should come over the other party, which has done no wrong? Is not glad forgiveness all that is due? Was Christ's death for our sake or God's sake? Was it the necessary result of his work and life for us? Is the Unitarian idea of reconciliation one of the cardinal points of the denomination, and a necessary consequence of its idea of God and man? What do you think of the Orthodox idea of Divine justice, that could not forgive men until Christ had died, and also that without Christ's death, God could not have forgiven the millions who were born before him? Does it add to the confusion of the idea of the Trinity, that an Infinite sacrifice, God the Son, was needed to appease the wrath of an Infinite God the Father?

LESSON XIII.

CONVERSION AND REGENERATION.

§ 42. "Conversion" is the translation of a Greek word which in the New Testament means "to turn round." When we are going the wrong way, we must turn round in order to go the right way. Religious conversion is almost the same thing as repentance. When we are conscious that we are not obeying the truth and not doing our duty, we need to turn round and to enter at once upon a new path. This is conversion; and this act may become necessary many times in the course of our life.

§ 43. "Regeneration" is the Scripture word used to signify the new life which has its source not only in the sight of God's law but also in that of God's love. Then, when we come to see the love of God in all things, we are born again and become new creatures. We can turn away from our sins, but we cannot create for ourselves the new heavens and the new earth of spiritual joy and love. They are revealed to us, in the soul, by a Divine influence.

A converted man is one who has determined to do right and has begun to do right. The regenerate man is one in whom the habit of right-doing is established, — one who has come to *love* it, and to whom it is no effort.

QUESTIONS.

§ 42. From what does the word "conversion" come? Is religious conversion the same as repentance? Are children often sorry that they have done wrong and yet do not grow better? Is it easy to begin at once to do right? Do many learn but gradually to do what is right? Is once turning round in the right

direction enough? Can we turn or not as we please? What are "revivals"? Do they do good? What is the "Salvation Army" of England?

§ 43. What is the derivation of "regeneration"? When does it come in the religious life? What is "the new life"? Can you forget what you have once known? When we are wrong, what must we do? How do spiritual love and joy come to us? Unless we have turned ourselves towards the right, can such love and joy come to us? When was Paul converted, and when was he regenerated? Was Nicodemus converted or regenerated? Do you need to be both converted and regenerated? Do most people? Which process is the slower, which the more difficult, which the higher and happier? If regenerated, are there yet constant little slips in goodness? Must the main purpose of your life always be noble and pure? When we are both converted and regenerated, how should we feel towards those who err? Do our experience and sympathy help others? Are there any who cannot be regenerated? Does conversion or regeneration happen at any special age? Can either come in another life? What then do we think of God's forgiveness? Can man then be totally depraved?

LESSON XIV.

PRAYER.

§ 44. Prayer is turning to God and speaking to him in full confidence that he will listen to us. This is the heart of prayer. An active, hopeful reliance on God so opens the soul that his life flows in and gives us strength. Jesus says, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: for every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened" (Matt. vii. 7, 8).

When the disciples came to their Master, and said, "Lord, teach us to pray," his answer was in the words which we to this day call the "Lord's Prayer" (Luke xi. 2-4). The first preparation for prayer is to wish to love and to serve God. If we do not find this desire in our hearts, we must examine ourselves to see what is wrong in our will, and we should ask God to help us to a right state of mind and heart.

To pray aright we must be sincere. Jesus says, "God is a spirit; and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" (John iv. 24). We must not say with our lips the prayer which we do not feel with our hearts. When we are happy our joy may overflow to the Heavenly Friend from whom all our blessings come; when we are unhappy we may pray to the same loving Friend for comfort. When we are away from God we must pray to be brought back again; and when we have sinned we shall find no peace until we have asked our Father to forgive us and to help us to be again his obedient children.

§ 45. *Objects of Prayer.* — The chief objects of prayer are spiritual. We ask God for strength, peace, purity, love, — that is, for the Holy Spirit. We know that to do any duty effectually it should be done in the right spirit. But we cannot always obtain a right spirit by an effort of the will. We may be depressed, or anxious, or vexed, or irritated. In that case this

bad spirit will go into our words and actions, and prevent us from exercising the good influence we really have at heart. But if we open our soul to God, and ask him to help us to feel right in order to do right, we may be sure that this help will come.

May we also ask for outward blessings? Some good and wise persons think that we ought not. They consider it selfish to do so, and they also believe that this is asking God to suspend the action of his universal laws. Others, however, say that we may ask God for anything we desire, and that God wishes to have us do so; just as a good father and mother like to have their children bring to them all the wishes of their heart. Only, in such cases, we must ask in submission, as Jesus did, "Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt" (Matt. xxvi. 39). We must also ask "in his name." This, however, does not mean repeating the words "through Jesus Christ," as though these words might have some magical power. But "the name of Christ" means the spirit of Christ. We must ask in Christ's spirit, not selfishly, but including the good of others in our prayer.

§ 46. *Times of Prayer.* — It may be well to have some fixed times for prayer, — for example, the beginning of the day, when we are about to resume the duties of life, and need to go to them in a right spirit; and at the close of the day, when we may look back and thank God for what he has helped us to be and do, and ask his forgiveness for our failures. It is also desirable to pray, even for a moment, before any work which requires preparation that it may be done aright.

§ 47. *Answer to Prayer.* — Some Unitarians believe that the only answer to prayer is the good influence which the thought of God's presence exercises on the soul. In this sense prayer is the same as contemplation, or meditation. Others, however, believe that by a law of the Divine government prayer puts the soul into such a relation with God that we can receive a direct influence from him. This law requires us to ask as the condition of receiving some special blessing, which we should not be in a condition to receive unless we pray for it. This makes a real communion between God and the soul.

QUESTIONS.

§ 44. What is prayer? How does reliance on God affect our praying? What words of Jesus insist on such reliance? Do you often repeat the Lord's Prayer? What sentence in it do you like best? What must be the preparation for prayer? Is sincerity needed?

§ 45. What are the chief objects of prayer? Does prayer help our feeble will? Is it selfish to ask for outward blessings? Does such asking mean that God's laws should be altered for our sake? How does a knowledge of the laws of God as seen through nature and in science affect our prayers? Do we therefore pray for general rather than special blessings? Are our prayers any less often or less fervent? Can we, however, help asking God for everything, just as we ask our parents because we tell them all that is in our hearts? If we ask submissively, then is such asking right? How do we ask in "the name of Jesus"?

§ 46. Is it helpful to pray at morning and at night? Must you not pray oftener if in temptation, and when you are happy or sad?

§ 47. What is one answer to prayer? Do many people believe that prayer is more than meditation? Why is communion more than meditation? How do you like this definition, "Prayer is resolve with the thought of God in it"? What hymns about prayer do you know? As one grows older and better, do prayers grow longer or shorter, more or less fervent? Can little children pray as well as older people? Do they pray in the same way? Why not? Can one's whole life be such a prayer that words are seldom used? Do you like to pray? Can you be pretty good and yet not care to pray? With the Unitarian idea of God and man, is it very natural to pray? Is prayer adoration, gratitude, trust? Can we pray for each other? for the dead? Are short, simple prayers as earnest as long, carefully worded prayers? What is the truth that lies at the heart of the Catholic doctrine of masses for the dead?

LESSON XV.

THE CHURCH.

§ 48. Unitarians believe that the Church is a union of those who come together to help each other to live a Christian life. The essential character of a church is stated by Jesus when he says, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. xviii. 19, 20).

To meet "in the name of Christ" is to meet in his spirit, to do his work. To pray "in his name" is to pray in the same spirit in which he prayed. "In the name of a prophet, or righteous man" (Matt. x. 41) means in a spirit of sympathy with the prophet or righteous man. The Jews laid more stress on a name than we do. We regard it as an accidental appendage; they gave names as indicating character.

§ 49. Unitarians believe that the work of the Church is to reform the vicious, to educate the ignorant, to strengthen the weak, and to co-operate in all attempts to elevate and improve society. For this reason they look forward to the time when all churches shall unite together in the purpose of doing good, so that at last God's kingdom may come, and his will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

§ 50. Unitarians generally accept the two ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, not as essential to spiritual life, but as helps to it. They regard both, not as ends, but as means. They consider them as natural symbols and outward images of inward feeling and purpose. If practised merely as forms, without this inward application, their value is gone.

§ 51. Baptism, or the external application of water, expresses the desire that the infant or adult baptized may be surrounded by those outward Christian influences which conduce to purity of character and conduct. Water is the natural symbol of purity.

When Jesus washed the feet of his disciples he expressed this thought, and added that the disciples also ought to wash each other's feet, — that is, that they ought to help each other to put away the defilements of sin.

In baptizing infants, Unitarians do not intend to express a belief that this outward act can have any effect on the soul of the child. No Unitarian accepts the doctrine of Regeneration by Baptism in any such sense as this. But by this rite we express our belief that the infant is already dear to God, and we baptize him as an expression of our wish that he may have the help which comes from union with the Christian Church, and our desire that his parents and all others may be faithful in surrounding him with Christian influences, and educating him in the Christian life.

§ 52. The Lord's Supper, or the partaking of bread and wine in company, is a sign of Christian brotherhood. It also symbolizes the inward influences of Christianity, as Baptism is a type of the outward influence. Bread was the type of strength, and wine of joy. The Lord's Supper is a feast of communion, or brotherhood. It also recalls to us the death of Christ for the good of all mankind. It is thus a feast of remembrance, and has a tendency to produce and maintain a living sense of our personal relation to Jesus as a teacher and friend. To eat his flesh and drink his blood signifies, in Oriental language, to make his teaching and character a part of our own life. Unitarians usually invite all those who desire to remember Jesus to unite with them in this service. They do not consider it intended for members of the church only, or only for professing Christians, but for all who love Jesus and wish to express their love by communion with his friends.

These two ordinances of the Christian Church, having been continued from the beginning, unite successive generations of Christians with each other as well as with their common Master.

§ 53. Unitarians in New England, having originated among the Congregationalists, are independent in their form of church government, and are therefore called Congregationalists. Each church is independent of others, though ready to unite with

them in work and sympathy. For these purposes they meet from time to time in local Conferences and in a National Conference.

In other places, where Unitarian beliefs came up among the Presbyterians, as in the North of Ireland, or among the Methodists, as in the Western States, Unitarians retain some of the methods of church government belonging to these other denominations.

QUESTIONS.

§ 48. What is the Church? What verse states its character? What is meant by meeting or praying in the "name of Christ"? Did the Jews regard a name as important? Are not others also apt to overestimate the value of a name? Have there been quarrels about names?

§ 49. What do Unitarians regard as the work of the Church? Have churches been established on points of doctrine alone? Have those who were "regenerate" wished to exclude the "unregenerate"? Have such felt that all those who took part in Church work must take part in the sacraments?

§ 50. How do Unitarians regard Baptism and the Lord's Supper? Are they of use if practised merely as forms?

§ 51. What does Baptism express? Why is water used in its service? Does the outward act of baptism affect the child? Is the act really an expression of a wish for the child's welfare and for the parents' success in educating him religiously?

§ 52. Of what is the Lord's Supper a sign and symbol? How is it a "feast of remembrance"? What do the words "eat his flesh and drink his blood" signify? For whom is the Supper intended? What is, after all, the great test by which one may become a church member?

§ 53. What is the Unitarian form of church government? Does our method of government show belief in freedom and in individual responsibility? What is the Presbyterian and what is the Methodist form of government? Are many Trinitarian churches "Congregational"? Does the word "Congregation-

alism" describe our *church polity?* Is the word "Unitarianism" our *doctrinal title?* What is the old distinction between church and parish? Is a union for the sake of goodness alone, simple, grand, and wide?

What is the National Conference? In how many good works is your church engaged? In how many more might it be if every one helped? Have children their part in church work?

LESSON XVI.

CREEDS.

§ 54. A creed (from the Latin "credo," I believe) is simply a belief. In this sense creeds are good, useful, and desirable for individuals. If two or three who hold the same belief unite to convince others of its truth, this also is natural and right. If they state their creed in propositions and articles, this also may be useful. To such creeds Unitarians do not object. Many of their churches have adopted such statements of opinion.

§ 55. But Unitarians object to religious creeds under the following circumstances: 1. When they are made a test of character; 2. When they are made a condition of fellowship; 3. When they become an obstacle to progress.

Most of the creeds of the Christian Church have been liable to these objections. They have been made a test of Christian character, contrary to the distinct statement of Jesus that obedience, not belief, or profession, is the true test of character (Matt. vii. 15–27), and that true religion consists in love to God and man (Mark xii. 28–34). They have been made a condition of Christian fellowship, contrary to the declaration of Jesus that whosoever shall do the will of God is like a mother and sister and brother to him (Mark iii. 35). They have been an obstacle to progress, imposing the opinions of past centuries upon present belief. Though Unitarians reject such creeds as these, their religious convictions are not the less distinct and earnest.

QUESTIONS.

§ 54. What is the derivation of the word "creed"? Are creeds useful? When one or more individuals holding a creed combine together to convince others, are they useful? Is it wise to state such belief in the form of propositions or articles? Have many churches such "statements of opinion"?

§ 55. What are the three ways in which creeds are harmful? What did Jesus say was the test of character? Have creeds caused persecutions and prevented progress? Have Unitarians any creed in the usual sense of the word? Why? Have they always placed character above belief? Yet did not their coming out from Orthodoxy in New England show that they valued the importance of right belief and of loyalty to what they believed? Are there any churches which you know that have articles of belief? How do you like the term "basis of fellowship" instead of creed? Should the recognition of a creed in a church ever limit inquiry? What happens when it does? What happens when it does not? Did the early leaders of Unitarianism establish any creed, — such men as Channing, Gannett, Dewey? Had they strong convictions? Did they, and do Unitarians now, trust free thought? Could Unitarianism then, consistently with its belief in freedom and character, formulate a creed?

LESSON XVII.

LIBERAL AND RATIONAL CHRISTIANITY.

§ 56. Liberal Christianity, or freedom in religion, does not mean liberty to believe what we choose, but freedom to seek the truth anywhere, everywhere, and always. It means that we should not only be willing that others should differ from us, but ready to help them to inquire freely, even if their inquiries lead them to believe what we consider erroneous. It means that we are not to judge each other (Matt. vii. 1–5; Rom. xiv. 1–23), nor to submit our own belief to the judgment of any church or any human authority.

§ 57. Rational Christianity does not mean that we are to reject all beliefs which we do not now see to be reasonable, or to make reason the only source of truth. But it means that we are to test every belief by the light of our reason, and seek to understand clearly what we think and why we think it.

QUESTIONS.

§ 56. What does Liberal Christianity mean? How can we have freedom in religion? Does religion fetter the soul, or bind the soul to God? Why have we not "liberty to believe what we choose"? (Because of various reasons, such as indolence, apathy, lack of seriousness, etc., many choose to try to believe what they know is untrue.) Must we be careful to make right choices? Then is there freedom to seek everywhere for the truth? Having found what we carefully think to be the truth, must we submit it to the judgment of another?

§ 57. What does Rational Christianity mean? Is a belief unreasonable because a child cannot understand it? Must we always employ our reason on every subject? Are Rational and Liberal Christianity the same? Are all forms of Christianity

liberal? Why not? What do the words "orthodox" and "heterodox" mean? Could the heterodoxy of one age have become the orthodoxy of another age unless a free and liberal spirit had existed? What historic examples are there of such changes? How do you like the motto "Freedom, Fellowship, and Character in Religion"? What is the difference between reason and dogma? What is reason? (see Lesson I. § 3.) Did Luther uphold the right of reason? Does a liberal and rational spirit exclude loyalty to one's own faith? Is Unitarianism a free, rational, liberal religion? Is it thus enabled to feel "the sympathy of religions"? Does a Rational and Liberal Christianity presuppose awe, reverence, faith? Is faith based on trust? Can we trust what is not rational? Is there not the "mystery of light" as well as the "mystery of darkness"? Which mystery is it, in a liberal and rational religion? Does such religion press forward to more and more truth? Is such religion but means to an end? Can we measure the grandeur of that end? Is the end the fullest knowledge of God, the fullest development of one's self, the truest happiness of others?

LESSON XVIII.

RELIGIOUS DUTY.

§ 58. Unitarians believe that the whole duty of man consists in doing justly, loving mercy, and walking humbly with God (Micah vi. 8); in loving God with all the heart, and one's neighbor as one's self (Matt. xxii. 37–39). They believe that the essence of religion is goodness; that "the pure in heart see God;" that whoever heareth Christ's sayings and doeth them has built his house upon a rock (Matt. vii. 24). They believe that if we have an earnest desire to lead a good life we may trust in the promise that "he who hungers and thirsts after righteousness shall be filled;" and that if we are ready, when we fail, to repent, confess, and forsake our sin, "God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John i. 9).

§ 59. We believe that the really good man is in the way of salvation, whatever may be his outward form of religion. Mere surface morality, not rooted in principle, we do not call goodness. But whoever seeks to do the will of God, and to be faithful and just to man, whether he be heathen or Christian, we believe will be accepted by God, the Father of all mankind (Acts x. 35; Matt. xxv. 34–41; Rom. ii. 14–16).

§ 60. Unitarians regard goodness as the end, and religious acts as the means and helps to that end. Inward goodness of the heart expressed by outward goodness in life is primary and essential. Religion is for the sake of goodness, and belongs not only to the Church and to Sunday, but to every place and to all times. It must go with us to our home, to our place of work, to our amusements, and be the help and strength of every day. Religion is given to make all of life sacred; to sanctify business, politics, pleasure, work, and all our intercourse with each other.

QUESTIONS.

§ 58. What is the whole duty of man? Is it possible to do it all? What is goodness? Is love to God and to one's neighbor the same kind of love? Do you love yourself? If not, what does it mean "to love one's neighbor as one's self"? Is righteousness goodness? What is your leading purpose? Can you say you have a noble purpose and yet fail in its fulfilment? When you fail, are you discouraged? How ought you to feel? To whom should you confess your sins? Do you ever make apologies? Are they the same as excuses?

§ 59. What is surface morality? Have you known really good people who did not agree with you in religious thought? Mention some well-known names. What is "the way of salvation"? In what is real morality rooted? Is doing the will of God different from believing in him? Is doing it morality? Is believing in him religion? Why is the word "religious" put before "duty" in the beginning of this lesson? What will be the real test of our acceptance by God? What verses show how God judges?

§ 60. What is meant by calling goodness the end, and religious acts the means? What are religious acts? Can we be good without them? From what should outward goodness arise? If it has any other source, does it often fail? Should you be better on one day than on another? Where should you be good? Why is religion given to us? Do Sunday services alone make us good? How should religion affect all our life?

LESSON XIX.

THE FUTURE LIFE.

§ 61. Unitarians believe that the future life will be a continuation of the present life, with opportunity for further growth and development. They think that every man will go "to his place," — the place where he belongs, the place where it is best for him to be. Jesus says, "In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so I would have told you" (John xiv. 2).

§ 62. According to the New Testament outward death — what we call death — is nothing; it is merely the soul laying down its present instruments in order to take up others. The only real death is the *soul's* death; that is, sin, ignorance, unbelief. The soul which lives in sin is dead in its higher faculties. Christ comes to raise us out of this spiritual death into spiritual life; and then we say, "The law of the spirit of life, in Christ Jesus, hath made me free from the law of sin and death" (Rom. viii. 2). The Apostle says that Jesus has "abolished death" (2 Tim. i. 10); and Christ says of himself, "I am the resurrection and the life" (John xi. 25). The truth and love and influence of Christ are the resurrection of the soul, just as they are the life of the soul. The resurrection is spiritual resurrection, as the life is spiritual life. When Jesus says, "And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son and believeth on him may have everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day" (John vi. 40), he does not speak of the resurrection of the body, but of the principle of spiritual life which he communicates to the soul.

When we believe that God cares for us, that he loves us, we are free from the fear of death. We trust ourselves entirely to our faithful Creator, and say, "Into thy hands, O Lord, I commit my spirit," sure that when with him we are always safe.

QUESTIONS.

§ 61. What is the future life? Are there opportunities in it? What is meant by saying that every man will go "to his place"? Is the future life a state as well as a place? Who said, "In my Father's house are many mansions"?

§ 62. What is the only real death? What has Christ done for us? What is the resurrection and the life of the soul? What does John vi. 40 mean? When are we free from the fear of death? Where does immortality begin? Why? Have we other reason, besides the words of Christ, to believe in immortality? What do science and human consciousness teach? Have all nations and tribes believed in another world? What kind of ideas have they held? What is your own idea of heaven? Does belief in immortality grow stronger as we love God and feel his influence? Is his very character an evidence of immortality? What effect does such belief have upon your own present life? Does such belief help you to bear the miseries of others? Can such belief make us selfish? Are there not noble people who do not believe in immortality? If we feel we have many evidences of immortality, are we not therefore happier? Have we not then more courage for ourselves, and more courage in witnessing the suffering of others, from the belief that by and by they will rejoice?

LESSON XX.

PROBATION, JUDGMENT, AND RETRIBUTION.

§ 63. We often hear it said that this life is a state of probation; but we believe it to resemble rather a school, where we are to be educated for a better and higher life hereafter. The trials and sorrows of this life are a wholesome discipline, meant to unfold and strengthen the powers of the soul. We are to learn here the difference between right and wrong, between truth and error, — learn to form habits of goodness, learn to love and trust God, learn to live with our fellow-men as brethren. To do this, we must often examine and prove ourselves, and thus find out our strength and our weakness. In this sense life can be said to be a period of probation. God does not need to prove us to find out what we are. "All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do" (Heb. iv. 13).

§ 64. The Judgments to come, like the judgments of this life, are probably different for each individual soul. The Day of Judgment arrives when any one comes to know himself as he really is, and is seen by others in his true character. Our conscience demands a Divine judgment on all human conduct and character; not so much that the good shall be rewarded and the wicked punished, as that goodness which has been misunderstood shall be justified, and that wickedness which has passed for goodness shall be exposed; that wrongs shall be righted, and that men shall see the justice of God. It is also necessary for a man's own moral progress that he shall be undeceived if he is deceiving himself. But just so far as a man is able to see his sin here, and is ready to confess it and to repent of it, so far he makes the judgments of the future life less necessary for him. Therefore it is said, "If we would judge ourselves we should not be judged" (1 Cor. xi. 31). "If

we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John i. 9). In John v. 22 it is said, "The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son." Elsewhere Christ says, "I judge no man" (John viii. 15). These passages are harmonized by the saying of Jesus, "The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day" (John xii. 48). The truth which Christ taught is to be our standard, and by it we shall be judged.

The essential thing in the judgment to come we believe to be the manifestation of truth to every man's conscience in the sight of God, — to see ourselves as we are, and God as he is.

§ 65. Unitarians believe that future retribution comes from the operation of the same laws which produce retribution here. By the everlasting principles of Divine Providence, right-doing tends to moral health, peace, and spiritual growth; wrong-doing, to moral disease and suffering. These laws are beneficent in their operation in this world and in all worlds. All punishment is intended to reform us and to do us good. This principle of the Divine government is expressed in Heb. xii. 10, where it is said that the Father of spirits chastens us "for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness."

QUESTIONS.

§ 63. What is the difference between a state of probation and an opportunity for education? How has your own experience taught you to regard this life? Are trials and sorrows discipline? Is discipline useful or pleasant? Could we improve without discipline? Is self-examination advisable? Is joy or sorrow the more helpful?

§ 64. Are the future judgments like present judgments? When does our Day of Judgment come? What do conscience and a sense of justice demand? Is it reward that we want, or that truth shall be revealed? Is self-deception wise? How can we lessen the judgments of the future life? Are we

judged by Christ or by our adherence to the truths which he taught?

§ 65. What causes future retribution? Is retribution always the effect or consequence of preceding actions? How then can retribution be prevented? How is the Moral Law related to retribution? Does the certainty of the one establish the certainty of the other? Does the sense of individual responsibility increase the more we believe in the Moral Law? What is the purpose of punishment? What does Heb. xii. 10 teach us?

LESSON XXI.

HEAVEN AND HELL.

§ 66. Unitarians do not believe that hereafter there will be two distinct and separate worlds, — one for the good and the other for the wicked, — the one of perfect unchanging happiness, the other of entire and unchanging misery. The "great gulf" (Luke xvi. 26) between the good and the bad man in this and in all worlds consists in the everlasting distinction between good and evil. So long as one is in the hell of selfish desire and will, no consoling drop of heavenly content can be brought to him. Unitarians believe in many hells and many heavens, according to the character and condition of each person. They believe that the purpose of future suffering will be reformatory and not vindictive; and that if a man is selfish and wilful, it is best for him to suffer the consequences of these evils in order to become better.

§ 67. Unitarians oppose the common doctrine of everlasting punishment as being hostile to the sovereignty, wisdom, justice, and mercy of the Divine Being, and also as limiting the redeeming power of Christ and his Gospel. They believe that, the object of punishment being reformatory, it will only continue until the sinner shall be reformed.

If it be said that we have no right to reason from human justice and mercy to that of God, we answer, 1. That all we know of justice must come from the principle of justice implanted in the human consciousness by God himself; 2. That Jesus himself compares the love of the Heavenly Father with the love of the earthly parent, and shows us from an example of imperfect goodness what we may believe that the Divine goodness will do for us (Matt. vii. 9–11).

The doctrine of everlasting punishment tends to destroy faith in the redeeming and conquering power of the Gospel; for in

that we are taught that goodness is stronger than evil, that love is able to conquer all sin, and that it is the pleasure of the Father to reconcile all things on the earth or in heaven to himself by Jesus Christ (Col. i. 20).

When Jesus declared (Luke xv. 7) that "joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth more than over ninety and nine just persons which need no repentance," he implied that the grief in heaven over one lost soul would outweigh the joy over ninety and nine that are saved, and that even the angels cannot be happy while one sinner turns himself away from the love which is waiting to bless him.

QUESTIONS.

§ 66. Do Unitarians believe in two distinct worlds? What is really the "great gulf"? Do we make our own heaven and hell? How? Are we making it now? What is the purpose of future suffering? What is the difference between "vindictive" and "reformatory"? Why must we suffer the consequences of evil?

§ 67. What is meant by everlasting punishment? Do you believe in it? Why not? If the object of punishment is to make people better, how long should it continue? How does the doctrine of everlasting punishment limit the power of God? Is there any such thing as a personal Devil? Can God do anything which is unjust? Does finite sin deserve infinite punishment? Does Jesus compare the goodness of a father with the goodness of God? Can we not reason about Divine goodness in the same way? Does the doctrine of everlasting punishment agree with the teaching of the Gospel? How do those who believe in it limit God's power? What is the meaning of Luke xv. 7? Has the doctrine that there is a hell been widely preached? Could Unitarianism help protesting against it? Does disbelief in it follow from our view of God, from our trust in Christ's teachings, and from the use of our reason? Is not the thought that we can begin to make a heaven for

ourselves and *for others* in this life one of the most inspiring and religious motives for action? Does not the Catholic idea of purgatory contain the true gospel of eternal hope? Does not the belief that the next life is one of service and progress indicate that our heaven must begin on earth, and that we must be "fellow workers" with God?

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